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ABSTRACT

It is pointed out in this discussion that mentoring, as a delivery tool in a beginning teacher induction program, has great potential, and the use of experienced educators in guiding relatively inexperienced teachers is of value not only to the first-year teacher but also to the mentor. In examining the goals of mentoring-induction programs, the functions of evaluation (gatekeeping), retention of new teachers, socialization of newcomers, and improvement of work performance are discussed as they relate to the responsibilities of the mentor. The wide variety of roles that mentors perform include teacher, role model, consultant, friend, door opener, confidant, advocate, protector, listener, and counselor. Mentors can also provide new teachers with help in classroom instruction and management, relations with other teachers, administrators, and parents; in addition, they can help to alleviate isolation, anxiety, and self-doubt. Mentors may also play a role in helping to solve personal problems. Suggestions are made for improving mentoring programs and making them more effective. (JD)

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Leadership and Cooperation Through Mentoring: Rethinking Roles in Teacher Education

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Preservice and inservice teacher education has gained considerable attention and momentum in recent years. The now historic report, A Nation At Risk, captivated the thinking and conscience of the American public and, even more importantly, the political leadership. This document and other more substantive reports and studies which have followed it have kept schools and teaching near the forefront of the political agenda. The debate about how best to prepare and retain skilled teachers for the 21st century has focused new attention on the concept of teacher career development.

As a concept, teacher career development is not new. However, its emerging conceptualization represents new breakthroughs that enhance the possibility that a higher degree of permanence will result from the current movement. Earlier movements such as the Ford Foundation funded M. A. T. Programs, Teacher Corps, differentiated staffing and Teacher Centers all were attempts to meet then current teacher career development needs.

The current reform movement appears to have greater strength and support than did these earlier attempts to reform teacher career development. The strength of the present movement is derived from a synergy of several sources. First, there are individual state mandates in the form of legislation (e.g., California, Oklahoma, Tennessee,and Florida). A second contributing factor is the existence of seminal works that focus on the problems of teachers and the need for continued support in order for teachers to truly develop their abilities (Lortie, 1975; Goodlad, 1984). A third force is the emphasis given to teacher recruitment, retention and development by representatives of the larger teacher profession and affiliated political/lay groups (Carnegie Report, 1985; A Call For Change In Teacher Education, 1985). Finally, the willingness for individual school districts and teacher preparation programs to be risk takers through the development and implementation of cutting edge programs. For example, programs that utilize professionals in creative ways include Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Wisconsin Improvement Program, the Toledo Plan, and the teacher education programs at Memphis State University, University of Florida, New Hampshire and Austin College. A driving force behind this movement is the expectation of politicians and lay public that increased funding for education ought to result in significant and accountable improvements.

The emerging concept of teacher career development contains several new important characteristics. First, teacher career development is now seen to encompass the entire career spectrum beginning with admission to a teacher preparation program and

continuing through retirement. Second, during the various career stages teachers have different personal and professional needs; and, both the preparing and employing institutions have a responsibility to help meet these needs. Third, teachers themselves can assist with the career development of other teachers. Fourth, teacher career development is becoming recognized as a valid area of professional study and research.

Two aspects of teacher career development that have gained increased attention are induction and mentoring. Induction and mentoring are complementary but not synonymous concepts. While both concepts encompass a broad range of developmental activities, induction has a much shorter time span, focusing primarily on the first three to four years of a career.

Induction

Induction is generally understood to refer to the first few years of teaching following completion of the preservice education program, and normally overlaps the probationary period which often precedes permanent certification. Though lacking a standard definition, Johnston (1985) observes that the concept of induction is characterized by specific practices extended to beginning teachers that are not usually made available to experienced teachers (e.g., reduced class size, assignment of a helping teacher, additional orientation and extra released time for planning or observations). Johnston (1985) proposes several goals for the professional beginning teacher induction.

1. To provide an orderly, personalized transition from the preservice teacher preparation program to the work of teaching.

2. To provide beginning teachers with additional knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for successful teaching performance in the specific work setting of the initial teaching assignment.

3. To build a firm foundation for continued positive professional role development.

4. To help beginning teachers recognize and manage the debilitating effects of isolation, self-doubt, stress and anxiety often associated with the first year of teaching.

5. To foster skills and habits that will allow beginning teachers to reduce or eliminate teaching problems known to be common and troublesome for many beginning teachers.

6. To integrate the beginning teacher into the professional and social fabric of the school, school district and neighborhood community which the school serves.

7. To increase the likelihood that beginning teachers will continue in the teaching profession as productive, competent professional teachers.

Mentoring

Mentoring is one way to help deliver an induction program. The concept of mentoring is very old yet only recently has it gained wider acceptance as one approach to further the development of beginning teachers. There are several definitions of mentoring that are found in the literature. Four of these help to clarify the meaning of mentoring and to establish the general parameters for the content of a mentoring-induction program.

The Tennessee State Department of Education's Career Development Program module, Mentorship Development (1985) states that,"(Mentor) refers to one who is experienced and trusted, who advises, teaches, and trains relative newcomers to the profession." Alleman and associates (1984) define it as,"A relationship in which a person of greater rank and expertise teaches, guides, and develops a novice in an organization of profession." The Dictionary of Occupational Titles states, "Mentor is the highest and most complex level of functioning in people related hierarchy of skills." According to Rawlins and Rawlins (1983) "Mentors teach, advise, encourage, open doors for, and show politics and subtleties of jobs and help one understand the formal and informal power structures."

Mentoring, as a delivery tool in an induction program, has great potential. It is a way to take carefully selected experienced, educators and use their talents to assist with the professional development of relatively inexperienced teachers.

Furthermore, with the increased emphasis in utilizing representatives of teacher preparation institutions and local school systems as partners in the process of teacher early career development, mentoring is the vehicle for getting the most from the expertise that both parties have to offer.

The benefits of using mentoring as a key element in an induction program are many. They range from solving simple problems; such as Where do I get chalk? to more complex matters such as How do I handle parental inquiries about the content of the text series being used? Within the range of benefits that result from the use of mentoring in an induction program, two pervasive and positive outcomes occur.

Perhaps the most obvious outcome is the individual assistance the new teacher gets from the mentor(s). The protege gains almost immediate access to those who care about her/his progress, both as a person and as a professional. Good mentors should be trained and able to assist with a wide range of needs, thus providing an important degree of personalized assistance. Even when an issue is beyond the mentor's expertise, the mentor will usually have the training,skills and contacts necessary to locate the needed source of assistance.

The second outcome of a well-planned mentoring program, while less obvious than the first, is equally as important. This is the impact of mentoring on the mentor. Levinson (1978) sees mentoring as part of the developmental process that Erickson referred as "generativity." It is a way to provide new and important outlets for members of the profession whose own career are on the threshold of change. It provides the mentor with the opportunity to assume new responsibility and share in the burdens of his generation through exercising authority, giving leadership and participating in the decision making process that affects many others. Mentoring becomes a way to bridge the gap between the experienced and the inexperienced, to bond together past, present and future generations in the difficult task of staffing schools with quality educators. Mentoring provides opportunities to share the responsibility for teacher career development among groups who possess the knowledge,skills and attitudes necessary to assist the beginning teacher.

Mentoring-Induction Program Goals

Mentoring-induction programs can have a single or multiple goals. The goals established by groups involved in a mentoring-induction program are the primary factor in determining the roles that mentors will perform as they assist the proteges. Furthermore, program goals will determine the degree of cooperation exhibited among mentors in performing their roles.

James (1986), in discussing how Tennessee's Comprehensive Education Reform Act might affect a local school district's approach to the development of beginning teachers identified four potential goals for a mentoring program: gatekeeping, retention, socialization, and improvement of work performance.

Gatekeeping. The mentor's role in the gatekeeping function represents a source of conflict among the several parties involved in teacher induction. On the one hand, the education profession has a responsibility to support the professional development of beginning teachers. On the other hand, the education profession has a responsibility to the community to ensure that teachers who enter and remain in the profession are competent and able to cause pupils to learn and to provide for pupils affective needs. Recent legislative action in some states has mandated specific evaluation plans for beginning teachers. The result of these plans is that beginning teachers are very much aware that their performance is being monitored. As Johnston (1985) points out, if beginning teachers feel that requesting help with problems might result in negative evaluations, they may deny themselves the assistance they really need. However, if a mentor is available who is not apart of the evaluation or gatekeeping function, the beginning teacher can receive assistance which will help in the formation of a solid, healthy foundation for future career development. Unless beginning teachers are given access to mentors who are outside the evaluation process, they may well move toward rather than away from Lortie's "Robinson Crusoe syndrome.

> As with Defoe's hero, the beginning teacher may find that prior experience supplies him with some alternatives for action, but his crucial learning comes from his personal errors; he fits together specific solutions and specific problems into some kind of whole and at times finds leeway for the expression of personal tastes. Working largely alone, he cannot make the specifics of his working knowledge base explicit, nor need he, as his victories are private. Having laboriously found techniques for mastering his immediate environment, he may, like his predecessor, prove ambivalent when the chance for a big change looms on the horizon. (Lortie, 1965, p. 59)

Retention. Retention is an acceptable goal for a mentoring-induction program to the extent that the criteria for success are based on factors which are under the mentor's influence. However, many of the reasons that teachers give for leaving a particular job are outside the mentor's control. Retention based programs must focus on the issues and frustrations that affect the beginning professional. Target issues will include community adjustment and daily job embedded problems. Another issue that might be addressed in retention focused programs is the identification of professional promotion opportunities. Mentors for retention programs need to be well versed in the types of problems that teachers normally face in the first three years of teaching. They must also be able to explain the operating ethos of the community.

Socialization. A third goal for a mentoring-induction program is the socialization of newcomers. The primary objectives of this approach are to increase the understanding and adjustment of the new teacher to the expectations that other teachers, administrators, parents and the general public have regarding the

role of teachers and teaching in the community. Mentors who work effectively in this type of program must understand the school and community norms, be able to identify and explain the nuances of working successfully in the school and community and possess the visibility and contacts needed in order to introduce the newcomer to significant others within the community.

Improvement of work performance. Improvement of work performance is the fourth goal that James (1986) identified. The primary objectives are to improve the job embedded skills, provide professional guidance and counselling and to assist the newcomer in moving beyond survival skills. Within this type of program, mentors will need time to do classroom observation, possess the necessary data collection and analysis skills in order to make sense out of the classroom observations, possess good conferencing skills, and have a strong sense of general career development and, more specifically, how newcomers develop.

Mentors: Selection and Roles

The definitions of mentors offered above can guide the selection process and the kinds of roles that mentors will perform. Analysis of the common elements of the definitions suggest several characteristics that mentors should possess. These include experiential, personal and professional qualities. A mentor must be someone who has gained creditibility through experience. This connotes both years of service and breadth of

work. It may also suggest formal position, although this is not always important. On the personal level, mentors are people who want to assist others, can establish rapport with others, are trustworthy, and are open and willing to share. Professionally, potential mentors must have the respect of their colleagues, understand the workplace, demonstrate a willingness to share time, resources and information with the protege and possess the technical knowledge necessary in order to assist the protege with her/his continued development. A mentor also must be willing to learn about new roles and how to be more effective as a mentor.

Reducing or eliminating professional problems and meeting professional needs of beginning teachers are essential goals for induction programs. Mentors can play many roles in helping to accomplish these goals. These roles include teacher, role model, consultant, friend, door opener, confidant, advocate, protector, listener, and counselor.

Pupil instruction and classroom management. Mentor's can provide beginning teachers with a better understanding of the expectations of the school administration, parents and community for pupil achievement. This is a particularly important role if the beginning teacher is new to the community. The mentor can be in a position to understand the beginning teacher's personal goals and beliefs about pupil satisfaction, and can then be of assistance in helping the newcomer to select appropriate, and realistic instructional and management strategies. If mentors are

selected so there is a match between the teaching area assignment of the beginner and the subject are expertise of the mentor, then the mentor will be better able to help select appropriate strategies. This match is particularly important if beginning teachers are given initial teaching assignments in subject areas or levels they did not experience during their student teaching.

Beginning teachers are often concerned about whether or not they will know enough about the subject area they are assigned to teach. The mentor is in a good position to provide needed support to help overcome these rational concerns. Mentor's can be of particular help to beginners who are faced with a specific text or instructional program used in their new school or school system. Given the current emphasis on pupil achievement scores, beginners may be swamped by concerns such as, how many pages can I complete in a day? What are the absolutely essential parts to be covered? and the like.

Mentors are in a position to help beginning teachers understand the important system and school rules for pupil behavior, and can help them plan congruent and realistic rules for their classroom. Mentors can provide help by offering suggestions about effective approaches to beginning the school year-- a time when beginners often feel overwhelmed, and a time when clear standards are important for later success.

Relations with other teachers. As Applegate, Flora, Johnston, Lasley, Mager, Newman and Ryan (1977) illustrated, the beginning teacher is confronted with a complex array of

relationships with their more experienced colleagues. The matter is further complicated by the nature of the work of teaching and the structure of the workplace. Beginning teachers have few opportunities for collegial discussions about teaching. Access to an experienced mentor can provide such opportunities. Moreover, the mentor can serve as the interlocutor between the inexperienced beginner and the knowledge and skills of the more experienced faculty.

Relations with administrators. Many school administrators are responsible for both teacher development and teacher evaluation. This potential contradiction can be worrisome to the untenured beginning teacher. The mentor can be in a position to help the beginner understand the formal and informal expectations of the school principal. The mentor can provide insights into the administrator's modus operandi, thereby reducing one source of potential anxiety for the beginner. When new teachers understand the expectations and behavior of their administrator, they are free to concentrate on other matters, instead of having to devote critical psychic energy to this area of concern.

Relations with parents and community. Beginning teachers are often surprised by the diversity of attitudes and values children and parents express about schools and success in schools. The mentor can help the beginning teacher understand the values of the parents and community. Mentors can help prevent new teachers from unknowingly violating school community norms. Mentors can provide

specific strategies for positive parent relations which have been tested over time and found to be appropriate for the particular school community.

Isolation, Anxiety and Self-Doubt. Lortie writes that "Isolation sets the context for the orientation of the beginning teacher" (1965, p. 59). The mentor is in an excellent position to reduce the effects of working in relative isolation from experienced teachers and administrators. The new teacher begins the first job in a building with a contact. As this contact, the mentor is in a position to provide support, approval and friendship. When the new teacher encounters problems, the mentor can be a ready source of specific and non-threatening assistance. The possibility of failure is a real and fearful spector for many beginning teachers. Knowledge of formal procedures and standards are difficult enough for new teachers to assimilate. Further anxiety may result from difficulty in understanding the unwritten, informal lore of the school, the hidden assumptions and agenda in use by colleagues and administrators, and the social customs and values of the school and neighborhood community. The mentor can provide support to help counter the resulting anxiety and self-doubt.

Personal needs and problems. Many beginning teachers must deal with significant personal concerns at the same time they are striving to demonstrate their profession abilities to students, fellow teachers, administrators and the community (Johnston, 1979). Many beginning teachers have moved to a new community and are faced with matters such as locating housing, obtaining

utilities, banking, changing drivers license, shopping, and so forth. A mentor is in a position to help smooth these potentially bothersome matters, by providing specific information about the new community. Building new social relationships in a new community also may be of concern to beginning teachers. Again, the mentor may be able to help the new teacher meet school faculty and community members; or provide information about activities of interest to the newcomer where they might meet new friends. At the same time, the mentor can lend a sympathetic ear to concerns regarding adjustment to the roles of homemaker, parent, or spouse as these roles are affected by the work requirements of teaching.

Making Mentoring Work

Mentoring is an old concept. Its beginning may be traced to Odysseus' decision to allow his son Telemachus to be educated under the wise guidance of a man named Mentor. Its present usage is found in many professions and large industries/businesses. Historically mentoring has functioned as in a volunteer and informal fashion. In recent years, organizations have made attempts to formalize this process. Education, as part of its induction approach for new elementary and secondary teachers, is now advocating mentoring as one important approach. Mentoring has tremendous potential for providing a smoother transition from the college classroom to the workplace world. However, it will not succeed as a formal process if the approach is random and happenstance. The key will be the development and implementation

of a training/preparation program for those professionals who desire to help induct the newcomers.

There is no one best approach to the preparation of those who want to serve as mentors. Gray and Gray (1985) have developed an elaborate program for training mentors. Wagner (1985) describes several different approaches that have been used successfully in California. The Tennessee State Department of Education sponsored the development of a Career Development Program on Mentorship Development (1985).

Mentor training programs may vary widely, though certain key ingredients are necessary. First, those who will serve as mentors must have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Second, while there are general characteristics that mentors ought to possess, there is considerable leeway in the match of these characteristics. Individual profiles should be used allow aspiring mentors to assess their individual potential for success. Third, potential mentors need to have a clear understanding of the concepts of mentoring. Fourth, mentoring within an induction program focuses primarily on the teacher with fewer than four years of experience. Those who serve as mentor to this client group must understand the developmental needs of beginning teachers.

Cooperation in Mentoring Programs

Mentoring, perhaps more than any other induction strategy, requires a high degree of cooperation among all parties. Mentoring is a multi-facted induction strategy which demands shared responsibility and input. Many tasks must be accomplished for mentoring to be successful, and certain tasks are better suited to one group than another. Three groups, each with its own sphere of responsibility can be identified: (a) the local schools, school board, community and local teacher organizations; (b) the university and teacher education programs; and (c) state or intermediate state agencies.

The role of local groups. Pre-assignment induction activities (Johnston, 1985) are an appropriate time to begin local participation in mentoring activities. Individuals serving as mentors in each school can meet with new teachers and participate in introductory activities designed to provide teachers with information about the school system, the various schools and the school communities. Opportunities for face-to-face interaction between individuals who will, at a later time, take on specific mentoring responsibilities with a specific new teacher, can be helpful in arranging the best match between new teachers and mentors.

Once assigned to a specific building, the mentor can help a new teacher become familiar with the geography, formal rules, procedures and standards, and the informal lore and customs of the building. The mentor can help new teachers understand the specific curricular materials in use in the building, and the countless procedures and policies regarding matters such as attendance, lunch count, tardy students, parking, dress codes, grade reports, lesson plans, use of school facilities and equipment and the like. A particularly important role for the mentor is to help the new teacher to know staff; to deal with the secretary and custodian; to learn unwritten procedures about when fire drills are usually scheduled; to know that the principal likes teachers to keep shades drawn only half-way down; or to understand that posted announcements of meeting of the "Culture Committee" are really tongue-in-cheek invitations for teachers to meet at the nearby bar after school.

Working with local community members, the mentor can also be responsible for helping the beginning teacher to understand the economic base, values, diversity and resources in the community served by the school and the school district. The mentor can play an important role in helping the new teacher understand the relative merits of available options in benefit plans. Enrollment decisions regarding various health insurance, and retirement plan options are normally required early in the school year. The mentor can provide the new teacher with a more concrete

understanding of these options, at a time when the new teacher may not be in a position to understand clearly the practical implications of the various alternatives.

One important function of the mentor is to monitor the specific needs of the beginning teacher, and to provide only those kinds of assistance that are necessary. Planners of induction programs must be sensitive to overloading the beginning teacher with information. Often, school districts plan formal induction activities for all beginning teachers. Though well intentioned, such programs may not meet the needs of all beginning teachers. Some new teachers, for example, may require little assistance with parent conferences, while others may need a great deal of support. The mentor is in a good position to represent the beginning teachers needs to the school district. The mentor is in a position to let planners know that their mentoring partner does or does not need to participate in a particular activity, or that additional or different support would be more helpful. Mentors are also in a position to participate in support groups with beginning teachers to help them cope with the effects of reality shock, stress in the work setting, or family and personal concerns related to the work of teaching.

Cooperation from school administrators and from local teacher organizations is essential. Specific job descriptions for beginning teachers and experiences teachers serving as mentors will have to be negotiated cooperatively if mentoring efforts are to be successful. Only if experienced teachers who are serving as

mentors have released time to devote to this important role, will the induction approach be successful. We cannot reasonably expect a teacher to devote full time to preparation and teaching her own class, and also to be able to devote adequate time and energy to support the professional development of a beginning teacher.

Support for the positive career development of beginning teachers through mentoring will require cooperative efforts and consessions from both administration and teacher organizations.

The role of teacher educators. Colleges and universities, primarily represented by their schools, colleges and departments of education, can make important contributions to mentoring program. Since university faculty are not "on site" with the beginning teacher, they are not in a very good position to act as effective mentors. However, they are able to make other important contributions. In cooperation with surrounding school districts, institutions of higher education can participate in the training and preparation of local school personnel to serve as effective mentors. University personnel can be effective in preparing mentors by providing knowledge and skills in community background (anthropology, geography), listening (counseling, psychology) family and job relations (sociology, social work), cross-cultural skills (anthropology), as well as curriculum and instruction. University based teacher educators can also assist local school districts in evaluating the effectiveness of their mentoring efforts.

The role of state agencies. State departments of education are increasingly becoming more involved in teacher induction. In Tennessee, for example, experienced teachers on the higher levels of the Career Ladder are now available to serve as mentors for beginning teachers. In states where extended contracts are available to teachers, experienced teachers are better able to participate in pre-assignment and orientation activities with beginning teachers. State departments of education are also in a position to develop and disseminate guidelines for mentoring programs, and to serve as consultants for school districts who implement mentoring programs.

Mentoring is people helping people. As such, it has great potential for furthering the development of others. It has the advantage of providing personalized individual attention. The advantage of individualization is ideally suited to making an induction program work. Young professionals, as individuals, have both common and unique problems. However, the common problems generally occur at different times. A mentoring approach provides quick access. An important other outcome of a mentoring approach for an induction program is that it allows other teachers and educators renew and enlarge their contribution to the profession.

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